

HCS HB 59 & 269 -- SUICIDE PREVENTION

SPONSOR: Holand (Johnson, 61)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Committee on Health Care Policy by a vote of 12 to 0.

This substitute requires the Director of the Department of Mental Health, in partnership with the Department of Health and Senior Services, to design and develop a state suicide prevention plan in collaboration with the departments of Social Services, Elementary and Secondary Education, Higher Education, and Corrections. The plan must:

- (1) Promote the use of employee assistance and workplace programs to support employees experiencing depression or other psychiatric illnesses;
- (2) Promote the use of student assistance and educational programs to support students with depression and other psychiatric illnesses and substance abuse disorders;
- (3) Provide training and technical assistance to local public health and other community-based professionals on the best practices to prevent suicides;
- (4) Coordinate federal, state, and local agencies in order to collect and analyze data on suicides and suicidal behaviors in Missouri and annually issue a public report;
- (5) Establish a toll-free suicide prevention hotline; and
- (6) Recommend statutory changes and implementation and funding requirements to the General Assembly by December 31, 2004.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that over 700 cases of suicide are reported annually in Missouri. Missouri has a suicide rate 15% higher than the national average and a rate higher than surrounding states. Attempted suicides and suicides are a growing public health problem in the United States, resulting in increased health care costs and emotional and economic losses experienced by affected families. The bill would promote inter-agency cooperation at the state and community levels and recognition of warning signs associated with suicide.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Smith (118); Department of Mental Health; Department of Health and Senior Services; Paragard of St. Louis; Students Working Against

Depression; Missouri Statewide Parent Advisory Network; and Coalition of Community Mental Health Providers.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Joseph Deering, Legislative Analyst